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THE WILL OF THOMAS BENTLEY M.D.

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND DOCTOR TO KING HENRY VIII

WITH A BRIEF NOTE ON HIS CAREER

Printed in 1913

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BENTLEY, Thomas [c. 1485-1549]

THE many calls upon Dr. Munk's time, when engaged upon the Roll of the Royal College of Physicians, not permitting him an opportunity of ascertaining the history of Dr. Bentley's career, he inserted, some years ago, a communication in *Notes and Queries* which led to the collection of the following facts. The present is the first time they have been put together in print.

R. B.

329750

PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

Borough of Woodstock (*Port Moot*) *Deeds.*
Clark's Register of the University of Oxford.
Foster's Alumni Oxonienses.
Boase's Register of the University of Oxford.
Wood's History of the University of Oxford.
Hurst's Oxford Topography.
Turner's Records of the City of Oxford.
Thorold Rogers's Oxford City Documents.
Calendars of State Papers (*Henry VIII.*).
King Henry VIII.'s Account Books.
Augmentation Office Records.
Lysons's Environs of London (*Middlesex*).
Robinson's History of Tottenham.
Dr. Caius's History of the Royal College of Physicians.
Munk's Roll of the Royal College of Physicians.
Selden Society: Select Star Chamber Cases.
Harleian Society's Publications (*Oxfordshire*).
Visitation of Salop, 1623.
Visitation of Gloucestershire, 1623.
Gild Registers of Stratford-upon-Avon.
Halliwell Phillips's Subsidies of Stratford-upon-Avon.
Wills in the Principal Court of Registry.
Wills at Lichfield Registry.
Lipscomb's History of Buckinghamshire.
Dictionary of National Biography.
Notes and Queries.

And other works.
Also such references as are cited in the text.

"A wise Physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,
is more than armies to the public weal."

HOMER: *Iliad*, xi. 636 (Pope's Translation).

τῷ μὲν τὸ σῶμα διατεθειμένῳ κακῶς
χρεὶ ἐστὶν ἰατροῦ. τῷ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν φίλου
λύπην γὰρ ἔννους οἶδε θεραπεύειν φίλος.

MENANDER.

WILL OF DR. THOMAS BENTLEY

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. The xxvjth day of January in the yere of our Lorde God a thousande fyve hundreth forty and eight and in the seconde yere of the reign of Edwarde the Syxte by the grace of God of Englonde Fraunce and Irelande Kynge, defender of the Fayth, and in earth of the Churche of Englonde, and also of Irelonde, supreme hedd.

I, THOMAS BENTLEY of Stratford vppon Avon in the cowntie of Warwyck, Doctor of Phisick to the late Kynge of famous memory HENRY THE VIII, thankes be geven to God beynge hole in body p̄fet in memory and of good rememberaunce do make ordeyn and dispose this my present last wyll and testament in man^r and forme following: First and principally I bequeth my soule to Allmyghtie God only trustynge and firmely beleving to be saved by the fayth that I have in Chryst who dyd suffre for the redemp̄con of me and all mankynde—and I wyll that my body be buryed w̄tin the parishe churche of Stratford afore-said. Item I bequeth to my welbeloved wyf ANNE BENTLEY my best standinge cuppe of sylu' and gylte w̄t the cou' A nest of goblettes of sylu' and gylte w̄t the cou' My best salte w̄t his cou' Syxe

pottes of sylver and gylte w̃t their covers and all my sylu' spones w̃t all my juelles and all my right, tytle, and interest, and terme of yeres that J have of and in my house in Oxforde called George Hall together w̃t the indent^e^ of the same house w̃t certeyn ymplementes therin remaynynge as standerth whiche house is nowe in the tenure of Harman Evans. Item J bequeth to my sonne WILL^m^ BENTLEY my seconde best standynge cuppe of sylu' and gylte w̃t the cou' and a potte of sylu' and gylte w̃t the cou' Item J bequeth to ANNE BENTLEY my doughter my seconde best sylu' salte w̃t his cou' three pottes of sylu' and gylte w̃t their cou's and a kowe orelles xxs in money. Item J bequeth to my doughter DOROTHE BENTLEY my iij^de^ salte of sylver and gylte w̃t his cov'r a kowe and a calf orelles xxs in money Item J bequeth to ROBT WYNCOCKE a sylu' cuppe w̃t the cou' Item J bequeth to WILL^m^ CLERCKE whome J have brought vpp of charitie twoo heyfers to be delyu'ed vnto the said Will^m^ by myn executor at suche tyme as the said Will^m^ shall fortune to be maryed. The resydewe of all my goodes and catalles before not geven or bequethed as movable as not movable whatsoeu' they be my dettes beynge payd my funerall discharged and this my wyll beynge well and truly p'formed and doon J doo geve and bequeth vnto my forsayd wyf ANNE BENTLEY whome J doo ordeyn and make my soole EXECUTRIX of this my present last Wyll and testament them to distrybute as she shall thinke necessary to the pleas' of God and for the welth of my soule and all chrysten soules J also desyer and wyll my trustye and welbeloved frendes THOMAS BLOUNT and ROBT WYNCOCK to be

supvysers of this my present last wyll and testament to see the same well and truly p'formed and doon accordynge to the tenor therof—And the same Thom^s Blount to have for his paynes so to be taken in the premisses a sylu' potte gylte w̃toute a cover. IN WITNES wherof I the forsayd Thomas Bentley to this my present last wyll and testame't have putte my hande the day and yere above wrytten in the presence of John Jeffreys, Thom^s Waturman, Laurens Seytun, and Will^m Myns—

(sd) THOMAS BENTLEY.

Extracted from the Principal Registry of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice, 20th May, 1913.

In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

("6, *Coode.*")

The above Will was proved on the 4th of March, 1549.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

A scion of the Bentley family had settled in very early days at Stratford-upon-Avon, from whom were probably derived the offshoots at Henley in Arden, and perhaps the later and important one at Kineton.*

* Simon Bentley, of Stratford-upon-Avon, was dead in 1349; his widow, Agnes, and his daughter, Margery, were then surviving. For particulars of other members of the family, see the Guild Registers of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Church Registers of the same place. One of them, being nearly related to Dr. Bentley, may, however, be referred to here. For thirty-eight years in succession (previously to the appointment of the martyr, Hugh Latimer) the See of Worcester had been unfortunate in falling into the hands of four Italian intruders.

In 1505, a commotion having arisen at "Stratford-on-Avene," the Bishop of Worcester, Dr. Silvestro Gigli (who had been accused of the murder of Cardinal Bainbridge, Prince Bishop of Durham), took proceedings in the Star Chamber against Richard Bentley and two other persons, for having forcibly interfered in a municipal, or guild, election held at Stratford that year. [This Richard Bentley (whose wife was Margery) was born about 1446, was Alderman of Stratford from 1484 to 1508, and "Master" (of the Guild), or Mayor, in 1492-93-94. He had property at Stratford, and in 1508 paid for masses for his faithful servant, Margaret Butter.* He died in 1515.] According to the Selden Society's *précis* of the case, the defendants appeared in court and stoutly maintained their ground, and justified the strong action taken by them as being

* A member of the Butter family was one of the original publishers of some of Shakespeare's plays. Another Butter was in the household of King Henry VIII.

Another connection of the Stratford family was Geoffrey Bentley, who migrated to the Royal Borough of Woodstock (or Bladon) in the adjoining county of Oxford, where he is recorded to have purchased in 1487 some property on the Green.

About 1485, at Woodstock (the birthplace of Edward the Black Prince), a son is believed to have been born to Geoffrey Bentley, who was christened THOMAS. Turning out a boy of studious inclination, and possessed of natural aptitude for learning, after his early school training he was sent to William of Wykeham's "New College" at Oxford to continue his studies.*

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necessary to safeguard the independence of the electors. The conclusion of the case is not given.

The particulars of the Kineton family are too long to be given here, and are separately printed.

* Nearly the same age as Thomas Bentley were John Bentley, afterwards Vicar of Upper Ottery (of whom see "Calendars of State Papers, Henry VIII.," January, 1533, vol. vi.), and Nicholas Bentley, subsequently "preest of Pawles" (the earlier Cathedral of St. Paul's), who died in 1557. These may have matriculated at Cambridge. At Oxford, at the same time as Thomas Bentley, were Hugh Bentley, of Queen's College, and Peter Bentley, of University College, who might have been relatives, or even brothers. An episode in the after career of the latter may perhaps be related as being illustrative of the trials of the time. Early in June, 1538, the Rev. John More, a Hampshire cleric, denounced his neighbour, the Rev. Peter Bentley (the above), to the King for denying his authority as Head of the Church. "Sir" John More deposed that "When I (More) delivered to him, 'Sir' Peter Bentley, parson of Colemere (Colmer, near Selborne), the box, he opened it and took out the plurality (sanction for holding more than one benefice), and held it up, saying, 'Look, Sir John, what is this?' I said, 'It is the King's broad seal, which presenteth his own person.' He said again, 'Hold thy peace, man. I set not by this seal, nor by him—twysh!—not this much (making a fillip with his two fingers), for I trust to see the day that all this shall be turned ups and

Oxford had now recovered from the great pestilence of 1471, and here Bentley was fortunate in arriving at one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of the University. It is true that Warham (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury) and Foxe (Chancellor and Bishop of Winchester) had gone;* but he had as contemporaries, either in his own college or in residence at Oxford, such men as Dr. Thomas Chaundler (Warden of New College, and a singularly gifted man), (Sir) Thomas More (afterwards Lord Chancellor, and beheaded in 1535 for denying the King's supremacy), (Sir) Richard Sutton (founder of Brasenose College, and refounder of the Charter House), Edmund Bonner (afterwards, of evil notoriety, Bishop of London), Thomas Linacre (freshly back from Padua), Edward Lee (the opponent of Erasmus, subsequently Arch-

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down. A man may say what he will in his owne house.' Also when we were drinking at Priorsdenne (Priorsdeane is also near Selborne), discussing many subjects, especially obedience to God and our Prince, I said, 'I will prove that he is a spiritual man and Supreme Head of the Church,' he rose up and said, 'If ye mell with that matter, God be with you!'" The *agent-provocateur* More was successful in getting Bentley committed to prison. The parson (Bentley), says Lord Sandys of the Vine, has been committed by him to Winchester Gaol. Sandys wrote to Wriothesley (who was afterwards Lord Chancellor, and an executor of Henry VIII.): "The parson denies the first article, but the second not much." He also wrote to Cromwell (Earl of Essex) on June 21, 1538, that he had received his letter of the 10th instant from Eltham Palace containing the deposition of "Sir" John More against the parson of Colemere: "Cromwell desired him (Sandys) to suffer him to remain in prison, or discharge him as he thinks best. As More's accusation is malicious, he has discharged the Parson on a bond to appear when wanted."

* And also the great future minister Wolsey had left Oxford before Bentley came up to the University, and his connection with him was in later years.

bishop of York), Richard Pace (afterwards diplomatist, and finally Dean of St. Paul's), Alexander Barclay (author of "The Ship of Fools"), Reginald (afterwards Cardinal) Pole; William Latimer, William Grocyn, and John Colet (afterwards Dean of St. Paul's), all three distinguished scholars; and more important still, for a short time, Erasmus—a veritable galaxy of learning.*

While studying divinity and classical subjects, Bentley became interested also in Linacre's views and opinions, which extended to anatomy and medical treatment, and at the same time formed a friendship lasting throughout life, and one doubtlessly influencing his choice of a career. Thus attracted, it was not long before Bentley determined to take up the pursuit of medicine, and he became in due course a Licentiate of the University (in 1512), and commenced to practise locally. Pursuing his lectures at the same time, he was admitted as Bachelor of Medicine in June, 1516, and two years later he received his degree as Doctor of Medicine, in June, 1518, in the terrible year when Oxford was nearly depopulated by the ravages of the Plague.†

Bentley had achieved for himself, in comparatively

* Says Erasmus in one of his letters (given in English by Froude): "When Colet speaks I might be listening to Plato, Linacre is as deep and acute a thinker as I have ever met with, Grocyn is a mine of knowledge, and Nature never formed a sweeter and happier disposition than that of Thomas More."

† The entry in the Register of Oxford University runs: "Bentley, Thomas, M.A., sup. for B.Med. 4 Dec^{r}. 1513, disp. 22 Jany. 1513-14, had to read Johannine Sedulis in Valvis, 25 Jany., 18 June 1514, 1 Feby 1515-16, adm. B.Med. 27 June 1516 by receiving leave to read Ipocratis Aphorismorum, D.Med. and disp. June 1518, disp. 15 Dec. 1519."

a brief time, a high standing in the profession, and in consequence of the position he already occupied at Oxford, he was chosen as physician to no less important a man than the "great" Duke of Buckingham, whose ambition, like his father's, extended, it is averred, even to the Crown of England. Even though still in early years, Bentley was a man of discretion, passing successfully through a perilous crisis at the outset of his career, and, despite his known intimacy with (Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham), his prospects were neither compromised nor the expectations of his future called forth by his talents disappointed. The Duke (who was of royal descent, possessed of great wealth, and almost the largest land-holder in the kingdom) was at this time under grave suspicion of treason, and close inquiry was being made into his conduct and supposed plans. Bentley's advice seems to have been sought on other than medical grounds. The doctor was at Oxford when Buckingham's Chancellor, Robert Gilbert, towards the close of 1520, rode down from town with a confidential message from the Duke "to tell Bentley of the Cardinal's conduct, and what Margaret Geddynge has declared (against Buckingham) on the oath of (the Duke's cousin) Charles Knyvet." A few months later the great noble who overshadowed the throne was beheaded on Tower Hill. Neither King, nor Cardinal, long brooked a rival.*

The long-standing strife between the University

* An illustration of the Duke's arrogance has come down to us. On one occasion, when the Cardinal approached to dip his hands also in a basin which Buckingham was holding for the King, the Duke, it is related, poured the water out of it over Wolsey's shoes.

and the town was raging acutely while Bentley was at Oxford, but, owing to his popularity, he was not a sufferer through it. As far back as November 4, 1507, he had been elected by Convocation, on the demise of Mr. Thompson, "Northern Proctor" (an office which at that period necessitated occasional appearance at Court), and so was brought more prominently into the scene of conflict, though he did not long hold the post. Anthony à Wood speaks, however, of him as a highly favoured and privileged person, and instances a public declaration, sworn before the Regents of the University in 1512, to the effect that the Municipality would take no proceedings against, or act in any way contrary to, Bentley. Alderman George Havile, a local brewer, also "was discommoned by the University because he proceeded in his (the present City) Court against Thomas Bentley, physician, and did not cease when inhibited by the Commissary."

Dr. Bentley received an acquittance on April 20, 1521, for property given to the University of Oxford by the Rev. John Thorne, "lately Abbot of Reading," so it is probable that he occupied some position on the governing body. He was a Fellow of New College, but some time before leaving Oxford he was married to Anne,* daughter of .

Bentley resided after his marriage, when at Oxford, in one of the George Halls (of which there were no

* Wood cites, about 1513, the Christian name of the doctor's wife as Alice. If he is correct, it would indicate a first marriage, as the name of Dr. Bentley's widow and executrix was Anne (sometimes given elsewhere as Agnes). Until the reign of Queen Elizabeth (42nd year), Anne and Agnes were merely different spellings of one and the same name.

less than five in different parts of Oxford), which he rented from the Augustinian monks of Oseney Abbey before the Dissolution. According to Wood,* he occupied the George Hall in St. Mary's parish with part of the Lyon Hall, and also Woodcock Hall. (Dr. John Roper appears to have preceded him as the occupier, or Principal, of the George Hall.) It may be perhaps interesting to note that Dr. Butts was at this time the Principal of St. Mary's Hostel at Oxford. Before leaving Oxford, Bentley witnessed the refounding of Brasenose College and the building of Corpus College. Cardinal College (now Christ Church) was not begun until after his removal to the Metropolis.

The reputation of his ability had now extended to London, and in 1521 there is official record that "Dr. Bentley of Oxford" was sent for to Court, and consulted on several occasions. This is a greater tribute than would appear to-day, for at that time the country was almost without roads. Goods were conveyed between Oxford and London by barge,† and passengers travelled on horseback along causeways or bridle-paths.

The healing science in this country was now emerging from the portals of the monastery, and entering upon an independent existence, but Harvey had not yet discovered the circulation of the blood, Jenner vaccination, Simpson anæsthesia, or Lister antiseptic treatment. Henry VIII., no doubt im-

* See Hurst's "Oxford Topography," p. 186.

† Even as late as 1696 money was conveyed from Oxford to London by barge, and delayed by ice on the river (see Joyce's "History of the Post-Office," p. 67). As late as 1700 Smiles states that the journey from Oxford to London occupied two days.

pressed by the many dangerous and frequently recurring epidemics of the time, devoted much time to all matters pertaining to medicine, and was not averse himself from preparing on several occasions his own remedies, the merits of which he discussed with the royal physicians.*

Drs. Linacre and Chambre were growing in years, and also diverging into other paths than those of medicine, and younger men like Butts, Bentley, and Cromer, were coming to the front in their place, followed in turn by Owen and Clement. Some of these persons are depicted in Holbein's celebrated picture of Henry VIII., surrounded by the leading physicians and surgeons, about, or a few years after, 1518—a group of austere-looking men, closely shaven, and arrayed in monkish garb. The names of only two remain legible now on the scrolls attached, but Bentley *may* be among the figures on the left of the King.†

It is curious to find that a few years previously—in 1513—there were only thirteen qualified physicians or surgeons in practice in the whole of London. Owing to the Church having in early days the monopoly of learning, up to 1518 all medical practitioners in and around London had to be licensed by the Bishop of London, or by the Dean of St. Paul's.

* See Sir Henry Ellis's "Original Letters" (First Series), vol. i., p. 287 *et seq.*, and Sloane MSS., British Museum, No. 1047.

† In 1518 Bentley had only just taken his degree of M.D., and might have been away at Oxford; but Mr. Sidney Young places the date of Holbein's picture as some years later, which would make his appearance in it probable. Dr. Alfred Woltmann inclines also to a later date, and in his "Life of Holbein" supplies some more of the missing names, but not a complete list.

In Paris Ambrose Paré reigned supreme at this time, in Belgium Vesalius, and in Switzerland "Paracelsus." Encouraged by the great interest displayed in the matter by King Henry, and assisted by the personal support of his able and powerful minister Wolsey,* the Royal College of Physicians in London was founded in the year 1518. The need for such an institution was forcibly brought home by the repeated devastations of the plague—the *Sudor Anglicus*, or sweating sickness—in this country,† and the need for a larger trained body of experts to contend against them. Only in the previous year (1517) had Cardinal Wolsey suffered no less than four acute attacks of this malady, and his life was more than once in great danger.

The incorporation of the College was planned to some extent on the lines of similar institutions in Italy, and its foundation and scheme of organization was mainly due to Linacre's efforts, and the first meetings of the new corporation were held in his own house in Knightrider Street. In 1523 Bentley was chosen as a Censor of the College. Linacre's health was now failing. His labours as a scholar and as a physician had nearly worn him out, and he was also a martyr to the agonies of stone. The cares of the new College (which had the sole power of granting licences to practice in London and for seven miles around) were falling on the shoulders of others. With

* "Thomas Wulcy" he signed his own name. A fine portrait in oil of the Cardinal is one of the present-day treasures of the College.

† The plague was exceptionally severe in London in the years 1485, 1499, 1506, 1517, and again in 1528. A few years later the great Holbein died of it.

the first chill of autumn, the talented scholar, philosopher, and physician, passed away in 1524, and his remains were placed in the (old) Cathedral of St. Paul's.

Thomas Bentley, who had been one of the earliest Fellows of the College, and had long enjoyed the confidence of his predecessor and colleagues, after a brief interval was chosen, with the approbation of the King and of the Cardinal minister, as its second President in 1525 and 1526 in immediate succession to the illustrious Linacre, and this choice being found a happy one, he had the honour of being again re-elected to the same dignity in 1529 and 1530.* (From 1531 to 1540 the records of the College are, unfortunately, wanting.) In 1527 and 1528 Bentley was Consiliarius of the College.

Shortly after the death of Dr. Linacre, Bentley was formally appointed one of the physicians to His Majesty,† and took up his residence in London, his house being situated in the parish of St. Botolph Without, in "Alrichgate" [Aldersgate]. The King, when staying in the City, resided at the Bridewell Palace, lately erected by him on the banks of the Thames; hence probably Dr. Bentley selected a residence in its vicinity, so as to be near the Court when it was in London. Aldersgate Street (says Jesse in his "London") contained in those days a greater number of houses of the old nobility than perhaps any other street in the Metropolis. Among them were those of the Nevilles, Earls of Westmorland; the Percies, Earls of Northumberland; the Tuftons, Earls of Thanet; the Pembrokes; and the

* Dr. Richard Bartlet was President in 1527 and 1528.

† At that time more frequently styled "His Grace."

Petres (and a little later of the Shaftesburys, Lauderdales, and Dorchesters, and one of the residences of John Milton), besides many houses of the nobility in the Barbican adjacent.

In 1528 Dr. Bentley is mentioned as the recipient of a New Year's gift from the King. Soon after the Court was deserted, the sweating sickness reappearing with great virulence, and, amongst others, Anne Boleyn was seized with it. Henry VIII. roamed about the environs of London from spot to spot, with a few attendants only, to elude infection, and made his Will (and took the Sacrament) in fear of sudden death from the pestilence, at the same time writing tender letters to Anne Boleyn.

The Doctors of Medicine in this reign received their guerdon in two ways from the Crown—viz., by direct payments in money, and also by the grant of benefices. Linacre, Chambre, and Bentley held several ecclesiastical preferments, the latter as a layman only. Bentley sometimes added to these by lease, and in 1525 the Canons of Holy Trinity let the demesne lands of the rectorial manor of Tottenham, with the great tithes, to him for forty years (1526-1565); and in 1533 we find Wolsey's successor,* the Archbishop of York, Dr. Lee (the patron of Roger Ascham), writing to Lord Essex (Thomas Cromwell) to urge the claims of Dr. Bentley, "an old friend of his, and a right honest man," for the Manor of Stockwell.

Bentley's house in Aldersgate was handsomely equipped no less in furniture than in plate.† Of the

* The Cardinal Legate died at Leicester Abbey in November, 1530, at the age of fifty-eight.

† Glass at this period was so costly that it is curious to note that in the reign of Henry VII. the (house and) windows were

latter record has come down of the lofty "standing cups" in solid silver gilt over; the great salt-bearers, each in precious metal, and each with "his" cover; the massive silver drinking-goblets; and the many "pottes of sylver gylte"—all making a brave show at the banquet-table. One is not surprised, then, to find that his residence was burglariously entered by "a spinster, one Margaret Maxeborne by name," who decamped with some of the valuable plate it contained. The predecessors of the City Police appear to have been as efficient as their successors to-day, and the culprit was speedily traced, captured, and convicted. Maxeborne received, however, perhaps through the kindly intercession of the doctor himself, a royal pardon, given at Greenwich in May, 1533.

Similar evidence of the kindliness of heart of Thomas Bentley is revealed in his Will. He had brought up, "out of charity," a youth of the name of William Clercke, and when approaching the end of his life, he left an injunction to his wife, "myn executor, at suche time as the said William shall fortune to be maryed," that two heifers are to be presented to him.

[Whether the promotion of John Bentley (a Judge, and the Seneschal of Durham) to be Attorney-General for the Palatinate of Durham, and of the reverend father, Richard Bentley, to be the last Abbot of the wealthy monastery at Welbeck,* was

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the property of the heir, but the glass in them belonged to the executors; and it was not until Queen Elizabeth's time that the heir received the window glass as forming part of the house.

* A reference to the long-standing dispute between Abbot Bentley and William Philpott, a great merchant, will be found in Brown's "History of Newark," vol. ii., p. 358.

due to any family influence at Court is not known. The first was advanced by Cardinal Wolsey, and the second by the King's Vicegerent, Thomas Cromwell.]

In the autumn of 1533 a Princess was born to become famous in history—Elizabeth, daughter of Henry VIII.

Dr. Bentley's duties as one of the royal physicians brought him constantly to Court. It was an era of great events abroad as well as at home, but tidings of these reached the great mass of the inhabitants of the world but slowly. The newspaper had not arrived, but in the King's Palace the news of great occurrences of the day were known to all persons of importance—the doings of Luther in Germany, the Battle of Pavia, Vasco Nunez de Balboa's discovery of the Pacific Ocean, or the Sack of Rome. Each day brought forth matters of interest from a distance, and news of yet more exciting events in England.

In 1537 the Queen (Jane Seymour, the mother of Edward VI.), in recognition of his services, presented Bentley with a gold "brouche." In 1539 his emoluments at Court were doubled, and for a time nearly rivalled those of the redoubtable Sir William Butts. His servant even, in 1538 and in 1540, received a New Year's gift from the King.

Though for a quarter of a century engaged at Court and resident in London, Bentley retained his property at Oxford, and by a special charter (enrolled January 10, 1544-45) he transferred his house in the parish of St. Mary the Virgin there to one Harman Evans, a bookseller;* but the long lease of the

* "Thomas Bentley of Stratforde upon Avon releases to Harman Evans of Oxford, bibliopolist, all his right to a messuage

George Hall remained, with Evans as tenant, in Bentley's possession until the time of the doctor's death. The transaction shows, however, that about 1544 he had abandoned the intention of returning to reside at Oxford.

When the doctor, with advancing years, gave up his lucrative practice in London,* he retired to the home of his family at Stratford-upon-Avon, where, prior to 1544, he had either inherited or acquired a house. In 1545-46 he appears to have added considerably to his property at Stratford, and to have enjoyed the pleasures of rural life, and to have drunk pure milk from his own cows. Dr. Bentley's house was probably destroyed in one of the two great conflagrations which devastated Stratford-upon-Avon in Queen Elizabeth's reign. see end of book

The Sovereign and his physicians passed away at very nearly the same time. In 1545 Sir William Butts died, in 1547 the King. In 1548-49 Thomas Bentley died, and in 1549 Dr. Chambre.†

Bentley was buried in the church at Stratford-upon-Avon. After his death, his widow Anne, according to Mr. Halliwell Phillips, some time afterwards espoused Mr. Richard Charnock.

In his Will, made in the bleak month of January, 1548, the doctor mentions two especial friends,

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&c. in Oxford, in the Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, between a tenement of the Chamberlains of the City of Oxford on the east, and a tenement of John Jenyns on the west, and the King's way to the north."

* The last entry traceable of his pay from the Crown was in 1545.

† Chambre, like Linacre, ended his career as a priest. In 1546, too, another celebrated man passed away, Martin Luther.

probably Warwickshire men—Robert Wyncock and Thomas Blount. (It may be a coincidence only, the surname of the latter being identical with that of the mother of Henry VIII.'s son, the Duke of Richmond, who was one of the Blounts of Kinlet, a place situated at no long distance from Stratford-upon-Avon.)

Thomas Bentley had a son William,* who was a strict Catholic. He married Anne Porter, and died in Shropshire in 1574, apparently leaving no surviving issue, in which case James Bentley, of Aston, near Wem (1597), or William Bentley, of Wem (1618), would not be directly related.

Dr. Bentley had also several daughters, the names of only two of which appear in his Will.† Anne married, after her father's death, William Botterel, of Aston Botterel in Salop, and Dorothy married, after her father's death, Roger Gifford, of Hillesden, Bucks, as his first wife. Another daughter, Barbara, married Thomas Raynsford, of Little Compton in Gloucestershire. There *may* have been two others, also married—Eleanor Pearson and Alice Phynnett (who are mentioned as "sisters" in William Bentley's Will, but whether of him or of his wife is uncertain).

Thomas Bentley, of the Royal Guard, to whom the King (Henry VIII.) granted the House of the Black Friars (or Dominicans) at Dunstable, appears to have been a different individual, and he and his relative

* For some mention of exhibitions and exemptions granted to Dr. Bentley's son William, see "Calendars of State Papers" (November, 1531, and January, 1532). His Will will be found in the Principal Registry, in which he is described as of Aston Botterel, Salop.

† See p. 6. Barbara is, however, mentioned in his son's Will.

Richard Bentley were owners of other houses at Dunstable. Neither, probably, was John Bentley a relative who was at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1567, and was afterwards a Doctor of Medicine of Oxford, and also of Cambridge—he was chosen "to dispute" before Queen Elizabeth (when she was at Oxford in September, 1592) "whether air affects the human body more than food or drink"; or John Bentley, a Yorkshireman, *architectus peritissimus*, who built the great quadrangle of Merton College, and designed a new library and schools for the University — he was born in 1574, and died December 3, 1615, his sister Grace and his brother Michael surviving him; or another architect, Thomas Bentley,* who made some additions to Exeter College, Oxford, in 1597; or John Bentley, of All Saints, Lombard Street, London, who had some post at Court in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and died about 1585.

Lawrence Bentley, of Stratford-upon-Avon (whose name appears in the Muster Rolls of 1537), may, however, have been distantly related to the Doctor.

* Boase states that he was a native of Plymouth. The wing which he erected on the south side of Exeter College was a timbered building, long known as "Bentley's Nest."

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NOTES

According to Dr. John Caius's "Annals of the Royal College of Physicians" (printed for the first time by Dr. Venn in 1911) *in the years* 1519-20-21-22, *Bentley was one of the six colleagues closely associated with Linacre in the affairs of the College, and in the spring of* 1523 *the number of Electors of the College was altered from six to eight.*

"1523, *March* 12.—*Sex illis prioribus Electoribus asciti sunt ex præscripto Parlamenti alii duo, Ricardus Bartlot et Thomas Bentley*" (*p.* 8).

In 1525 *the record is defective* (*and also later on*).

On September 22, 1526, *Bentley was elected President of the Royal College.*

On February 8, 1529, *he was again so elected.*

On April 11, 1530, *he was again also similarly elected.*

In 1529 *Sir William Butts was co-opted a Member of the Royal College.*

In King Henry VIII.'s Private Accounts (*Arundel MSS., No.* 97 *BM*) *the names of the Royal Physicians are interspersed each quarter with those of the nobility. Dr. Bentley's name on each occasion follows that of Dr. Butts, and precedes that of Dr. Chambre.*

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD

DR. THOMAS BENTLEY

THREE TIMES PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
PERSONAL PHYSICIAN TO KING HENRY THE EIGHTH

(*Addition to Biographical Note*, p. 22.)

WHEN Dr. Bentley retired from practice in London, and from the Court, he moved his household to Stratford-upon-Avon. Here he rented the chief house in the town from Squire Clopton, "The Great House" erected by Sir Hugh Clopton (Lord Mayor of London) about 1483. Bentley took a lease of this (on November 20, 1545) for forty years, and also of some land for his cattle and horses. On the higher ground north of the town he rented Walnut Hill Close, and Frame Close, near Ingon, and on the lower land to the south of the town Ryen Clifford, and also Burgetton Heath. This lease he subsequently—about 1547—changed for one for his own life-time, and for that of Mrs. Bentley so long as she remained a widow.

The Great House, afterwards known as New Place, had massive stone foundations and cellars and brew-house below, surmounted by a capacious and pretty superstructure of red brick and timber, and was surrounded by a garden, and stood in the centre of the town of Stratford at the corner of Chapel Lane. The house seems to have had a deep bay window on the south front, a kind of Solar, "looking out upon the grim square tower, the embattled stone wall, and the four tall Gothic windows of that mysterious temple—the Guild Chapel just across the road—a building (says Winter) of singularly picturesque quaintness." This Hall of the Guild of the Holy Trinity (from which the priests had been expelled in the stormy days of Henry VIII.) had been adorned by Sir Hugh Clopton with a fine steeple tower, glass windows, and a painted ceiling.

Dr. Bentley died at New Place in 1549, and was buried in the parish church at Stratford. His widow became Mrs. Richard Charnock, and Mr. and Mrs. Charnock occupied the big house until 1558, but apparently suffered it to get into disrepair. Either on this account, or owing to the religious feuds which then distracted Stratford, they were obliged to quit it.

New Place became subsequently the home of William Shakespeare the dramatist, who died in the house (and possibly in the same room as Dr. Bentley) in 1616, and was buried in the parish church of Stratford. . . . In July, 1643, Queen Henrietta Maria stayed for a few days at New Place. The house was demolished in 1720 by another Sir Hugh Clopton, and a second New Place was built by him, which was demolished in turn by the Rev. Francis Gastrell. In 1861 the Site was converted into a public garden. Some of the foundations of the original house still remain.

In reference to the Biographical Note, p. 17.

A remarkable account of the supposed origin of "The Sweating Sickness" will be found in "Fenton's Tour in Pembrokeshire" (Edition of 1811, pp. 164–166).

In reference to the Biographical Note, p. 19.

For some curious particulars of the especial privileges of the Vicars of Tottenham, consult *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, Vol. XII., p. 118.